

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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ENDANGERED SPECIES WORKSHOP UNDERWAY NATIONWIDE

The timber wolf in Minnesota, the red wolf in Texas, and the American alligator in the Southeastern United States are three typical endangered species now under discussion in a scheduled series of meetings between Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service, all 50 State governments, major conservation groups, and other Federal agencies.

The meetings were set up by Lynn A. Greenwalt, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, and are being held in FWS regional offices. The discussions focus on the implementation of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, a stronger law than the 1969 Act and one that carries specific requirements for both State and Federal agencies to meet within restricted time periods. All States will be consulted by June 7th.

"We are particularly interested in reaching cooperative agreements with State governments for the local management of endangered species programs," Greenwalt said. "States which qualify for such agreements retain authority to regulate the 'taking' of resident 'threatened' or 'endangered' species and become eligible to participate in a Federal grant-in-aid program authorized by the new law."

A section-by-section analysis of the law is being provided to all States, with particular attention given to whether new State legislation may be required to meet the requirements of the Federal Act. These would involve such areas as a State's ability to acquire land, its authority to conserve resident species of fish and wildlife, its scientific capability for setting up and conducting a program, and its provisions for public participation in designating resident species as endangered or threatened.

Federal Aid will now be available under the new act to State governments in amounts up to two-thirds of the costs of their endangered species programs, and States are being provided with details of how this part of the act will be implemented. A total of \$10 million for three years was authorized by the act to support State activities.

Most State governments have only until autumn to conclude a formal agreement with the Secretary of the Interior on the conservation of resident endangered fish and wildlife species. The Endangered Species Act, which was signed into law on December 28, 1973, stipulated that a State has 120 days after adjournment of its first regular legislature or 15 months, whichever occurs first, to enter into an agreement with the Secretary.

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